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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal and ever-blessed God, the Alpha and Omega, thank You for the gift of this day. Give us the wisdom to use it to enrich lives by service to others. Use our lawmakers to continue Your momentum in our world, enabling them to become salt and light to this generation.

Lord, as our Senators strive to be productive members of the family of humanity, empower them to do Your will. Supply their needs out of the bounty of Your celestial riches. If they fall, may they fall forward as they trust You to remain the author and finisher of their faith.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

INVESTING IN A NEW VISION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IN AMERICA ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3684, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3684) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3684

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, many States in the United States need infrastructure investment, but I would put the State of Washington high on the list of States that desperately need infrastructure investment.

We have been blessed with a growing economy and a big trade economy based on the Pacific rim and the actions of the Pacific rim. So we need to keep moving products. We need to keep moving services, and we need infrastructure investment to do so.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the work done by the Commerce Committee and those who worked on the Infrastructure Investment Act, specifically: Kara Fischer, Michael Davisson, Joanie Lofgren, Zeb Schorr, Ronce Almond, Alex Simpson, G.G. Slais, Nicole Teutschel, Jennifer Quan, Matthew Bobbink, Jami Burgess, David Martin, Amit Ronen, Stacy Baird, Devon Helfrich, Patrick Eckroth,

Naseem Mehyar, Hannah Albert, Eric Vryheid, Elle Wibisino, John Branscome, Shawn Bone, Brian McDermott, Mary Claire York, Jared Bomberg, Shannon Smith, John Beezer, Noam Kanter, Jordan Blue, Tiffany George, Lucy Koch, Hunter Hudspeth Blackburn, Kelly Ryan, Dave Stewart, Melissa Porter, and David Strickland.

These are some of the individuals who were involved in putting together the commerce piece of this underlying bill. About 20 percent of the underlying bill was the focus of the Commerce Committee and its jurisdiction.

I want to thank Ranking Member WICKER and his staff for the hard work to pull off what was the bipartisan bill that came to the Senate floor as part of this package.

Our legislation, I think, is a historic investment to rebuild our transportation infrastructure, including investments in things like megaprojects, basically helping to eliminate our problems at grade crossings, improve our freight network, improve our environment by removing culverts, and helping Amtrak better serve the United States of America.

All these were important investments, but we should look at the firsts. First, we are authorizing for the first time megaprojects. Megaprojects often take up so much of our budget in our States and federally they never get funded, but that doesn't mean they aren't critical to the United States.

In the Northeast Corridor, we certainly have megaprojects. In the Pacific Northwest, we have megaprojects that would be critical, like the Columbia River Crossing between Vancouver and Portland, or the Highway 2 trestle in Everett. These projects deserve the attention of the Nation and, with this first-time authorization, will get so.

The bill also puts a historic investment in freight and in Amtrak. As I mentioned, the economy of a global nature is demanding that we be able to

• This “buller” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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move competitively our products. But if we don't continue to invest in freight, we are not going to get that job done. So this provides \$66 billion to improve our passenger rail and freight system, the single largest investment that we have had in our Amtrak system that was funded 50 years ago.

The Commerce Committee's bill lays the foundation for this funding, which I believe will do three things. It will mean more investment to fix the problems in the Northeast Corridor; more specifically, it will give us the ability to have more sequencing of trains throughout the United States of America; and it will provide for new service in city pairs that, I hope, will help economies all across the United States with more investments.

I know, specifically, the Senator from Montana, Senator TESTER, is very adamant about our Amtrak funding and the services that Montana demands. I want to thank him for his help on this.

I want to thank Senator DUCKWORTH for her hard work in making sure that Amtrak complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This is so important for us to do, and her language, making sure that we also have someone from the disabilities community on the Amtrak board, is the kind of thing that should be followed in other examples in this legislation.

I also want to say, for the first time, we are addressing specifically at-grade crossings. This is the instance where there is congestion in freight, in my State, multiple times the increase in freight traffic. Again, you know, a lot of Midwest product moving to Asia has increased a demand in safety and transportation. Somebody quoted one of our reports that it took freight 3 days to get through just the city of Chicago because of the amount of congestion.

Our job here is to make sure that our product, made and grown in the United States of America, gets quickly to its destinations or we will be outcompeted by other nations that have an infrastructure system that can beat us to those marketplaces. So this provides, for the first time, a focused program on improving at-grade crossings to continue to make the investments that need to be made to keep our freight moving and our public safe.

It also, for the first time, authorizes transportation improvements to repair culverts. Culverts and other transportation infrastructure have done damage to our environment. They have done damage to fish; they have basically blocked spawning grounds. They have caused other infrastructure challenges to species all along our coastal States. This program will help to improve that situation by repairing some of the fish passage that has been blocked for so many years. This is so important for us in the Pacific Northwest, but it is also important throughout the South and for our many, many coastal communities.

So this transportation legislation that went through the Commerce Committee, as I said, also, you know, makes other investments. This floor bill also makes other investments for bridge repair, for transit systems, for climate resiliency, and specifically for our airports. You probably haven't heard too much about that out here on the floor, but in the Commerce Committee, I can tell you that aviation, transportation, and competitive—I know that the Presiding Officer knows this very well; that in Las Vegas or in Reno that infrastructure like our airports is essential to our economy continuing to grow. SeaTac is probably one of the fastest growing airports in the United States right now, and under this legislation, we will also see an important improvement for our airports so they can continue to grow and so we can continue to make investments.

I also want to, as I mentioned, thank Senator WICKER in the title for vehicle safety. These are important provisions that he and I and others on the committee—Senator BLUMENTHAL for his work on safety legislation that related to both the Northeast Corridor and to individuals in transportation, including, with Senator WICKER, the life-saving technology, like an automatic emergency braking system, preventing child heat stroke deaths, and impaired driving faculties.

So I again thank all of the members of the Commerce Committee for their hard work in getting this legislation as part of this package.

I think we can see that we have some firsts here: first investing in megaprojects; first in cleaning up our environmental problems with culverts; getting our freight product through our most congested corridors with improved at-grade crossing; and making the major investment so that Amtrak can continue to expand.

So I look forward to working with my colleagues as we move through the legislative process and continue to make improvements in our transportation infrastructure.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, later today, Senate Democrats want to take their next big step toward playing Russian roulette with our country. They want to begin pushing through a reckless taxing-and-spending spree that was authored by our self-described socialist colleague, Chairman SANDERS. Today, the American people will learn exactly where each of their Senators stand.

The American people elected a 50–50 Senate, an incredibly close House of Representatives, and a President who pledged to govern down the middle and unify the country. But as soon as President Biden, Speaker PELOSI, and Leader SCHUMER got the keys, they handed them right over to the far left.

Remember, Democrats inherited three safe and effective vaccines that were already rolling out nationwide and an economy that was primed to come roaring back, but our colleagues pressed ahead with a massive spring-time spending package that even liberal experts said would drive inflation, and, of course, it did.

Overall inflation has risen at the fastest rate in nearly 13 years. Core inflation hit its highest level in almost 30 years. Families are getting hit by higher prices everywhere, from the grocery store to the gas station, to their housing costs. Small businesses have had trouble reopening because would-be workers are getting a government bonus to actually stay home.

So the country is still working through the side effects of the borrowing and spending the Democrats forced through back in the spring, but Democrats don't want to just refill their socialist prescription; they want to double the dose—double the dose. According to what they just released, Democrats want to unite behind Chairman SANDERS' resolution to spend a staggering \$4.2 trillion more. Of course, outside experts estimate the real cost will be even higher still.

If it is even close to fully offset, as they claim it is, this seems almost certain to be the largest peacetime tax hike on record. So let that sink in—the largest peacetime tax hike on record.

Even though their rough sketch of these tax hikes would shatter President Biden's promise not to raise taxes on the middle class, families earning well under the President's stated threshold would get hit and hit hard. This new reckless taxing-and-spending spree will fall like a hammer blow on workers and middle-class families: fewer jobs, lower wages, more inflation pushing costs higher and higher.

What our colleagues are proposing and planning is absolutely jaw-dropping. People want to pretend this is just business as usual, just liberals doing liberal things using Senate procedure. Make no mistake, this reckless taxing-and-spending spree is nothing like we have seen—nothing.

The basic math of their taxing and spending is toxic enough, but the radicalism that we will be debating on the floor goes well beyond dollars and cents. The policies they want to put behind this budget resolution read like somebody walked across the Rotunda to the House and handed the Squad a pen and piece of paper: sweeping—sweeping—amnesty for illegal immigrants in the middle of a border crisis, regulations that are so radical that our colleague Senator MARKEY said:

The green new deal is in the DNA of this . . . budget resolution. All of the things that are in [this], we talked about in the green new deal.

Senator MARKEY.

They want to induce 49 other States to make their electric grids more like California's; make it more expensive to mine critical minerals we need to compete with China; they want to take

working families' child tax credit and turn it into a permanent welfare program—listen to this—with no work requirement; they want to tamper with the prescription drug industry in ways that would leave Americans with fewer new treatments and fewer new cures; they want to put government's thumb on the scale of families' childcare choices and selectively subsidize parents whose households work the way Washington wants; and they want to tax more money out of Americans' pockets while reviving a special tax cut that overwhelmingly benefits wealthy people in blue States.

So let's face it. The brute facts of the Senate's rules mean that, if 50 Democrats plus the Vice President stick together, Republicans will probably not be able to save our colleagues from themselves. If all 50 Democrats want to help Chairman SANDERS hurt middle-class families, even if our colleagues who claim they are moderates want to follow the far left off this cliff, well, that is their prerogative, but we are going to argue it out right here on the floor at some length. Every single Senator will be going on record over and over and over.

Senate Republicans will be bringing forward commonsense amendments that represent what Americans actually want and actually need. Our colleagues can look forward to votes on national security and funding our Armed Forces; votes to remove backdoor tax cuts for wealthy liberals; votes to protect family-owned small businesses and family farms from crushing tax hikes; votes to encourage schools to finally reopen in person; to stop the catch and release of COVID-positive illegal immigrants coming into our country; to protect taxpayers from being forced to fund the horrors of abortion. And that is just a sampling. Because our Democratic colleagues missed some deadlines, it has been an all-out sprint to prepare amendments.

So I want to thank our nonpartisan Senate clerks and Parliamentarians. They have worked multiple weekends, straight through. They were kept up late last night processing hundreds of amendments, and they are going to be up late with all of us yet again.

If President Biden and 50 Senate Democrats want to outsource domestic policy to Chairman SANDERS, if this historically reckless taxing-and-spending spree is how the modern Democratic Party wants to define itself, if they want inflation and tax hikes to be their legacy, then Republicans do not currently have the votes to spare the American families this nightmare, but we will debate and we will vote and we will stand up and we will be counted—and the people of this country will know exactly which Senators fought for them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this past Saturday, at 9 p.m., Chicago Police Officer Ella French was shot and killed during a traffic stop on the Chicago South Side.

Her death is devastating. Officer French was 29 years old. She had served as a member of the Chicago Police Department since 2018.

Her brother described her as the epitome of a good Samaritan. A fellow officer said of her: "She truly showed the community that she loved them and would do anything for them."

Officer French's partner was also shot and critically wounded. We pray for his recovery.

Two men have been charged by the Cook County State Attorney's Office in the shooting of these officers. A third man has been charged by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois for conspiracy to violate Federal firearms laws.

I hope that justice is delivered swiftly and fairly for the perpetrators of this horrible crime.

And let me be clear. As devastating as her death is, scores of individuals are shot every week in Chicago, and many lose their lives. For each of their families, the loss is just as intense as the loss of Officer French.

And as heartbreaking as Officer French's death is, it is also infuriating. We learned yesterday from the Chicago U.S. Attorney's Office that the gun used to murder Officer French was straw-purchased from a gun dealer in Indiana.

What is a straw purchase? It happens when a person who can pass a background check buys a gun and gives it to a person who can't.

Straw purchases have long been the way that guns have been funneled into the hands of those with felony convictions in Chicago, then to the streets, then to deadly incidents.

According to the charges filed yesterday by the U.S. attorney, an Indiana man bought the handgun from a man in Hammond, IN, and gave to it a person with a felony conviction, who allegedly used it this last weekend to kill Officer French.

For years, I have been fighting to toughen our laws against straw purchases. Right now, straw-purchasing is treated—listen to this—as a Federal paperwork violation for lying on a Federal gun purchase form. Charges are rarely brought, and when they are, the sentences are often just a matter of months. That needs to change.

I have joined with Senator LEAHY of Vermont and Senator COLLINS of Maine to introduce the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, a bipartisan bill that would make it an explicit Federal crime, carrying felony pen-

alties when a person straw-purchases a firearm.

We need to take this type of gun trafficking seriously. It is time for us to stop treating straw purchases like a paperwork misdemeanor.

As we have learned in the death of Officer French, it is a deadly act and should be punished accordingly.

Officer French's death is also a call to action for the strike force recently set up by the Department of Justice to crack down on regional firearms trafficking in Chicago.

I met with Attorney General Garland in Chicago when he launched the strike force 2 weeks ago, and I have written to him now urging that the strike force immediately prioritize the investigation and prosecution of straw purchases like the one that took the life of Officer French.

The strike force was established to keep a sustained focus on firearms trafficking in Chicago. That focus should include stopping straw purchases and holding the perpetrators accountable.

I look forward to working with the Justice Department and with my colleagues to find ways to crack down on the deadly gun violence that straw purchasers help to fuel.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. President, 2020 set a record for drug overdose deaths in America. More than 93,000 lives were lost in the year 2020. In Illinois, 3,500 of our neighbors died of overdose, a 27-percent spike from the year before.

How did we get to this point? Who is responsible for this?

There is one clear culprit: the pharmaceutical industry. For years, opioid manufacturers deliberately lied about the risks of their drugs—deliberately. These companies have claimed their pain killers should be prescribed for common aches and pains. They even downplayed their addictive nature even though their research showed that it was a very real danger.

These companies then shipped mountains of these pills to every corner of America. They aggressively promoted them to doctors, with the backing of dark money organizations.

This epidemic wasn't created by some infectious virus; it was created by corporate greed—corporate greed. In the words of Richard Sackler of Purdue Pharma, his company chose to flood our streets with "a blizzard of prescriptions that will bury the competition." It ended up burying the users.

As a result, 500,000 Americans families have had to bury loved ones who died of opioid overdoses and addictions since the start of the opioid epidemic—500,000 Americans, a figure in the same range as the 610,000 Americans we have lost to COVID-19. The numbers are numbing.

From 2006 to 2014, drug companies like Purdue Pharma inundated the country with 100 billion pain pills—100 billion. Let that soak in. That is roughly 300 opioid pills for every living American over that time.

They flooded communities like the rural county of Hardin in downstate Illinois. They received enough opioids in Hardin County for each resident to have a nearly 3-month supply.

Some counties in West Virginia and Kentucky had twice that level of oversupply.

One pharma rep even bragged: "I don't know how they can even house this many bottles."

Another wrote:

Keep 'em comin'! Flyin' out of here. It's like people are addicted to these things. Oh, wait, people are . . .

That level of greed and disregard for human suffering is an outrage, and the companies responsible must be held accountable.

You may be asking: Why haven't we done that already?

It is a good question—because not only was the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration aware of this obscene volume of overproduction; they authorized it. They gave permission.

The Drug Enforcement Administration of the U.S. Federal Government is responsible for determining the amount of opioid pills allowed to be put on the market each year. They are effectively the gatekeeper for these drug manufacturers and for years—years—they allowed opioid production quotas to keep increasing.

Between 1993 and 2015, production of oxycodone increased 39-fold; hydrocodone, 12-fold; fentanyl, 25-fold.

In 2016, America's pharmaceutical industry produced 14 billion opioid doses in 2016 alone, enough for every adult American to have a 3-week supply of opioids.

Think about that. Authorized by the Federal Government, requested by the pharmaceutical industry, we put a quota that Pharma asked for to produce 14 billion opioid pills in a year, enough for every American to have a 3-week supply.

Any wonder that we had an opioid epidemic?

I pressed the Drug Enforcement Administration on this issue years ago, when I learned of this. I asked them: How can you approve these ever-increasing quotas. Pharma is insatiable. They will ask for as many pills as they can possibly push into the American people's families, especially when DEA had data that showed this overproduction was fueling a deadly national drug crisis.

A couple years ago I worked with my Republican colleague, Senator JOHN KENNEDY of Louisiana, to start stemming the tide of addictive drugs. We passed a bipartisan bill that gave the DEA the authority they said they needed to set commonsense production levels.

We changed the law so the DEA must—must—consider abuse, overdose deaths, and the public health impact when determining opioid quotas.

Our approach worked, partially. Over the past 5 years, the DEA has lowered opioid quotas by an average of 60 percent.

The DEA, this Federal Agency, will soon be proposing its 2022 quotas, and I am sending a letter urging them to use their new authority and common sense to rein in the greed of Big Pharma.

In the face of all this suffering, new legal challenges have been brought to hold Big Pharma accountable for death and despair of the opioid epidemic. Thousands of lawsuits from States, counties, cities, and victims have been consolidated in one Federal court in Cleveland, OH.

This movement reminded me of another breakthrough moment in public health, when our Nation came together to hold Big Tobacco accountable for its misleading marketing over the decades. We started holding these companies accountable in 1998, with the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement. That settlement was estimated to provide States with \$246 billion over 25 years. But despite the pressing need, only a tiny fraction—a meager 8 percent of that amount—was actually dedicated to tobacco prevention and cessation activities.

Instead, tens of billions from that settlement have gone toward filling gaps in State budgets and funding pet projects like roads and bridges and stadiums, even a tobacco museum.

As new opioid settlements are reached, we must learn from the missed opportunity with tobacco lawsuits. We must ensure that the funds from forthcoming opioid settlements are used to fortify health systems so they can respond to the current opioid crisis and prevent our next drug epidemic.

All of us know what is going on out there. Even people who acknowledge their opioid addiction and are desperate for treatment and need help immediately wait for weeks and months to enter a drug rehab facility. That is just unacceptable. We need community- and residential-based treatment. We need to expand naloxone access. We need to address the childhood trauma often at the root of addiction and other public health strategies.

One of the things which I believe is essential, as our kids get back to school after the pandemic experience, is that we need more counselors on the scene at the schools dealing with these kids and this transition back into somewhat normal life. These are critical moments in a child's formation, and I hope that we can have resources available to help them.

The best way to hold Big Pharma accountable is by compelling these companies to pay the price for fueling this crisis, and their restitution should be devoted to helping America heal.

Last month, a bipartisan group of State attorneys general announced the framework of a litigation settlement involving Johnson & Johnson and the Nation's three largest drug distributors. The companies would pay a total of \$26 billion over 18 years to resolve the suits, in addition to changing their business practices.

The work isn't over yet, and I applaud the State attorneys general for their extensive work involving these opioid defendants.

Legal proceedings continue for several other key industry stakeholders that have yet to be held accountable—that includes the Sackler family of Purdue and OxyContin infamy.

The Sacklers are trying to engineer a legal scheme to escape liability through the bankruptcy court. That is the family that started Purdue Pharma, which was responsible for this opioid crisis. They think they found a venue now—a bankruptcy court—that is going to get them off the hook or at least make sure they can protect the money that they have made off of this criminal enterprise.

The Sacklers are trying to engineer a legal scheme to escape liability for their conduct through the bankruptcy court, avoiding future lawsuits, while paying \$4.5 billion, while protecting their vast fortunes estimated at over \$11 billion.

That is why Senator WARREN and I recently teamed up to introduce the Nondebtor Release Prohibition Act, which would prevent the nonconsensual release of liability through bankruptcy proceedings.

Translation: The Sacklers should not get a discounted ticket to ride into the sunset protecting their billions of dollars. They need to be held personally liable, and the amount charged against them should be taken into account.

We must demand that the worst corporate actors are held accountable for their role in this crisis. Far too many families have suffered as a result of corporate greed and malfeasance.

RECOGNIZING BARB'S BAKERY

Mr. President, sometimes you have the best of luck in life, and it is not planned. Neighbors of ours in Springfield, IL, Tom and Bridget Lamont, have invited us to join them at their little house on Lake Michigan in Leelanau Peninsula in the State of Michigan. In that time, we have had great experiences together, and we have come to know a terrific little shop called Barb's Bakery in Northport, MI. After years and years of wonderful service and great pride, they are giving up the business soon.

I have put in the RECORD a tribute to Barb's Bakery of Northport, MI. I am joined by DEBBIE STABENOW and GARY PETERS, both Senators from Michigan.

Mr. President, donuts have been enjoying a renaissance in recent years. Today, you can find "gourmet" donuts with flavors like kumquat, beet, guava, bacon maple, malted, salted cookie dough, and blueberry bourbon basil. But for my money, nothing beats the famed cake donuts and cinnamon twists baked fresh every morning at Barb's Bakery in the small town of Northport, MI. There is nothing exotic about Barb's donuts. They are simple, old-fashioned perfection.

My wife Loretta and I discovered Barb's Bakery years ago during a vacation in Northport with our friends,

Tom and Bridget Lamont, and we have gone back nearly every year since. Over the years, we have become friends with the owner, Barb Holcomb, and her husband Jerry Holcomb—great people.

When Loretta and I first discovered her bakery, Barb's donuts may have been the primary reason that travelers would make a detour through Northport, a picturesque little village at the tip of Michigan's scenic Leelanau Peninsula. That has all changed now. In recent years, new restaurants and shops have sprung up around town. But Barb's Bakery remains the anchor, both a destination—and a local institution. Each morning, it brings local cherry farmers, young families, and tourists together over coffee and donuts.

I try to stop by Barb's a little after 6 a.m., shortly after Barb or Jerry opens the doors. I will get a cup of coffee and a cinnamon twist, and Jerry and I will sit with the locals sharing local news and figuring out how to solve the problems of the world. Barb starts her workday at 1 a.m. each morning. That is when she goes to work to mix the batter for the next day's baking. By 6:30, the benches outside are usually filled with local farmers and retirees. At around 8 am, the late sleepers and tourists show up. But by 10:30 or 11, the last donut has usually been sold—so insider tip: Get there early.

You can smell the aroma of Barb's Bakery about 2 blocks away. Barb tells me the butter-yellow, clapboard bakery building was first constructed around 1850. Over the years, it has housed a dentist's office, a shoe repair shop, and now, Barb's bakery.

Barb first start working there when she was 13. She bakes her signature cinnamon twists on massive trays that hold about 6 dozen twists each. On an average day, she sells six trays full. Donuts are another big seller—classic cake donuts, plain or chocolate-iced—plus the special, seasonal flavors: cherry during cherry season and pumpkin in the fall. And Barb bakes the best cherry pies you have ever tasted.

Barb learned how to make her famous cinnamon twists from the women who owned the bakery when Barb was a teenager. Now, Barb is getting ready to pass that precious knowledge on. After 40 years of baking for others, Barb Holcomb recently sold her bakery to a young couple from the area, who plan to keep baking some of Barb's signature treats.

And Barb and Jerry are looking forward to taking a little time off and maybe sleeping late every once in a while. Barb plans to put quite a few miles on the royal blue 1970s Cadillac she just bought. She will continue to give generously, and quietly, to the people and the village of Northport, as she always has. And Barb and Jerry are hoping to do some traveling.

Years ago, shortly after she graduated from high school, Barb and a girlfriend took a magical trip through Greece and Afghanistan. And Barb fell

in love with Turkey. She returned again and again, often bringing friends with her. She bought a house in Istanbul, which she kept for many years. And she learned to speak Turkish fluently.

As Barb and Jerry get ready to start a new chapter of their lives together, Loretta and I want to thank them for all of the delicious donuts and for their friendship. And Michigan Senators, DEBBIE STABENOW and GARY PETERS, want to join me in saluting Barb and Jerry.

Let me close by saying to Barb: "Iyi sanslar." Best of luck, my friends.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in the time that I have been in the Congress, which includes 6 years in the House of Representatives and now in my 17th year in the Senate, I have been a part of or witness to or voted on numerous spending proposals and appropriation bills, tax bills, deficit reduction bills, and debt-limit increase bills through the years, and I don't think I have ever seen in all my time in the Congress a spending bill where Democrats didn't want to spend more and Republicans wanted to spend less.

Maybe that is consistent with our overall governing philosophies. Republicans historically believe in limited but effective government, in personal freedom coupled with individual responsibility, in economic freedom, and in peace through strength. Those are sort of guiding principles.

So when you get into a debate about spending and budgets and appropriation and taxes and all those sorts of things, in all the time I have been here—and I say this with respect to the bill that we are going to be voting on here in a few moments—Republicans try to spend more efficiently, more effectively—less, because they know that every dollar that gets spent here is coming from an American taxpayer.

So when the bipartisan legislation that the Senate will vote on here momentarily was being considered, it started out at about \$2.5 trillion. That is what President Biden wanted to spend on infrastructure. Democrats in the Congress—in the Senate; for sure in the House of Representatives but in the Senate here as well—wanted to spend way more than what Republicans wanted to spend. Republicans, on the other hand, wanted to come up with a bill that met the needs that the country has, that was robust in addressing infrastructure concerns out there but spent significantly less than what Democrats proposed.

I say that simply because it has been my experience—I have observed this, as I said, over the better part of 25 years now here in the Congress—that every debate, every fight about spending, taxes, and debt, Democrats want to spend more and Republicans want to spend less, again with the recognition that every one of those dollars that gets spent here in Washington, DC, is coming from an American taxpayer somewhere across this country.

So, as we think about what we are going to do next, I have to just say it is staggering to me, what we are talking about—the dimensions; the scale; \$3.5 trillion in spending on top of \$2 trillion spent earlier this year, much of which had nothing to do with the coronavirus.

Much of the justification for a lot of the spending at one time, at least, was that we had to deal with the pandemic, the coronavirus, but that is not the case now. We still have ongoing issues there. We need to make sure that we are investing in vaccines and all the things that make sure that people in this country are able to combat and that we are able to get this pandemic behind us. But what we are talking about with this \$3.5 trillion that the Democrats are intending and that we are going to vote on later today—\$3.5 trillion—their own estimate, not ours. A lot of private estimates out there suggest that when this is fully implemented over the full window, you are talking about \$5.5 trillion. You add to that the \$2 trillion that has already been spent earlier this year—all put on the debt, by the way, all borrowed from our children and grandchildren—and you are talking about a stunning, staggering, insane amount of money.

I have heard the analogy used here on the floor and other places by Democrats saying: Well, this is like the New Deal. This is the modern New Deal for America.

Well, the New Deal occurred in the middle of a Great Depression, where unemployment rates were running as high as 25 percent. The New Deal happened at a time when—my dad grew up in the Depression. I have heard him tell the stories through the years. People were struggling. They were struggling enormously. The government stepped in with some programs to help address that to get people back to work.

But what we are talking about here is double—double—the size of the New Deal as a percentage of our economy—double—at a time when we have, and the President was crowing about this the other day, 5 percent, 5.4 percent unemployment in this country and 900,000 new jobs created in the last reporting.

So if you think about where the economy is, we are coming out of the pandemic. People are investing again. People are getting out. They are spending money. We are seeing growth get back in the economy. We are seeing jobs created. It is literally, to me, the definition of "insanity" to pour 3.5 trillion, by their estimate—by a lot of

other estimates, 5 trillion—more dollars into the economy to literally give people free everything.

This isn't about addressing the pandemic or helping get people back to work. We have programs that do that. We have unemployment insurance that has been in place now for a long time. Many of us think the plus-up that the Federal Government provided was for too long because it was keeping people from going back to work. But the fact of the matter is, we are talking about a massive expansion of the Federal Government literally to give people pretty much free everything.

Not only does that contradict, I think, what this country was all about, which in its inception was about freedom and liberty, personal freedom, economic freedom, individual responsibility, providing people incentives to achieve and to do well, making sure that we have programs in place, safety nets for those who need that help, but the idea that at a time when the economy is growing and expanding and unemployment is at a fairly low rate historically, we are creating jobs that the Federal Government would think that it needs, in all its wisdom here in Washington, DC, to infuse \$5 trillion.

We already have inflation. It is at the highest rate in 13 years. Do you think pouring a lot of—flooding the economy with a whole bunch more money isn't going to exacerbate the inflation problem we already have? Not to mention, they are talking about paying for it—I don't think it will all be paid for. I think a lot of it will go onto the debt.

By the way, under this budget that is being proposed today, that the Democrats are, on a one-sided partisan procedure, going to vote on, is the biggest thing that we have seen certainly in my lifetime and will dwarf, as I said, anything we have seen in history. The debt at the end of all that—at the end of all that, 2031, the 10-year budget window—will be \$45 trillion, 134 percent of our gross domestic product.

There was a day when we were worried about borrowing up to 100 percent of GDP. Well, we have blown past that. We have dwarfed that. This is now completely out of control, completely out of hand. We are talking about a massive amount of new spending to expand government and, to the degree that it is paid for, paid for with taxes that are going to hit individuals, that are going to hit businesses, that are going to hit small businesses, and that are going to hit farmers and ranchers.

When you go down the list of taxes, the tax increases in this proposal, again, I mean, I don't know where you stop. The idea—the suggestion by the administration that you are not going to hit people who make less than \$400,000 a year is just absolutely, again, I think, insane. I don't know how you can raise \$3.5 trillion in taxes and not have an economic impact felt by people who are on the lower end of the income scale.

I mean, think about it. When taxes go up on businesses, what happens?

Well, people work for businesses. Democrats think it is easy. We will just raise taxes on businesses. Businesses are not paying enough. Well, where do people in this country work? They work for businesses. That is where they get their paychecks. That is where they get their benefits. Wages go down when taxes on businesses go up, to a historical fact.

If you think about what also happens when taxes are put on businesses, businesses obviously can do a couple of things. They may reduce wages or not hire people or reduce the size of their workforce. But they also pass that on with the cost of higher prices to people out there in the economy who are paying the price for it. That is what we are talking about here. It is just absolutely, absolutely stunning, really, in my time in the Congress to observe something that is being compared to, historically, the New Deal in a circumstance where the economy is growing and expanding, people should be going back to work; and in a time when we have already a \$30 trillion debt, as I said, headed in 2031 to \$45 trillion in debt, and something that literally dwarfs, as a percentage of the economy, what was done at the time of the New Deal, parallel the analogy that is being used here by my colleagues on the other side. There is just absolutely no rationale for doing this.

But that is what it calls for, \$3½ trillion. According to the budget committee analysts, it includes \$4.2 trillion in spending—on discretionary spending—and increased interests on the debt are included.

That bill, which was entirely unpaid for—and I am talking about the \$1.9 trillion bill that was passed in March, that was ostensibly COVID relief, but, in reality, was more like a list of pay-offs to Democrat constituents.

There were billions and billions of dollars for schools, while keeping teachers unions happy by omitting any requirement for actually getting kids back in the classroom, even though schools have barely touched the billions of COVID aid they have already been given.

And, by the way, handoffs to States with a distribution formula heavily weighted in favor of blue States, included bailouts for union pensions, loans for labor unions, and I could go on.

And when we talk about the money that is going to be, you know, in the budget the Democrats are going to force us to vote on later today, the additional spending that is going to be in there, that is on top of—on top of—the trillions that we put out the door last year, much of which went to State governments and many of which don't know how to spend the money they already have. We are talking trillions, much of which went to, as I said, blue States.

But while that bill wastes a lot of taxpayer dollars, the problem with that bill pales in comparison to what is

before us today. Today, Democrats are taking the first step toward a massive and permanent expansion of government that would be paid for on the backs of ordinary Americans. And my colleagues, as I said, on the other side of the aisle, will tell you they are just levying tax hikes on wealthy Americans, but that is not the whole story.

Those corporate tax hikes that Democrats are proposing, that tax just isn't going to be paid for by CEOs and the board members of corporations. A huge part of that is going to fall on American workers in the form of things like lower salaries and fewer opportunities.

The Tax Foundation notes that the share of the corporate tax burden that falls on labor is, "routinely found to be between 50 percent and 100 percent, with 70 percent or higher the most likely outcome."

By substantially hiking taxes on corporations, Democrats will be substantially increasing the burden borne by workers, not to mention reducing our competitiveness in the global economy by once again giving the United States one of the highest corporate tax rates in the developed world.

With our economy still emerging from the challenges of coronavirus, it is very difficult to understand why Democrats would decide that we should make American businesses less competitive on the global stage.

And that is the impact of just one of the Democrats' tax hikes. I haven't talked about the probable effects of their tax hike on small businesses—that is right, small businesses—or the negative economic effects of their huge tax increase on investment.

And then—then—there is the Democrats' new death tax. That is right, new death tax to add to our already existing death tax, which will reduce inheritances for middle-class Americans around the country, not to mention threatening the very existence of family farms and ranches and small businesses.

From the way that Democrats have been governing, you would think that voters have given them a resounding mandate to permanently expand government and implement the socialist fantasies of the far left.

In fact—we all know this—Democrats hold a narrow majority in the House of Representatives, where they lost seats; and the Senate is equally split between Democrats and Republicans.

And Democrats' far-left Presidential candidates couldn't make it out of the Democrat primary. That is right, President Biden was able to win the Democrat primary and the general election because he presented himself accurately or inaccurately as a moderate.

But despite their lack of a mandate, Democrat leaders are apparently more and more willing to let the far left of the Democrat party run the show, which is why we are standing here today contemplating a \$4.2 trillion

spending spree to permanently expand the size of government.

We don't yet know all the details of Democrats' budget-busting spending legislation, but what we do know is not encouraging. In addition to taxes that will burden hard-working Americans and hurt our economy, Democrats are contemplating a new welfare benefit with no associated work requirement. Lots and lots of free stuff, like 2 free years of community college; elements of Democrats' most extreme specialist fantasy, the Green New Deal; amnesty for individuals here in our country illegally; funding for tens of thousands—yes, tens of thousands—of new IRS agents; a tax cut for blue State millionaires and billionaires; and more.

And, by the way, on that point, it is really ironic to me to hear Democrats come down here and talk about Republicans wanting to cut taxes for rich people when this proposal, in this legislation, 50 percent—50 percent of the tax cut, by doing away with the cap on deductibility of State and local taxes; 50 percent of that benefit goes to people making more than \$1 million a year. So much for worrying about people on the low income of the income scale.

Democrats want to spend taxpayer dollars to hire hundreds of thousands of young people for a Civilian Climate Corps to fight climate change—Civilian Climate Corps. There is no word yet on whether this is actually an effective way to address our Nation's climate challenges, but that isn't going to stop Democrats from spending billions of dollars to find out.

I haven't even mentioned how all this new government spending is likely to increase inflation. Americans are already facing significant inflation, thanks in part to Democrats' earlier flooding of the economy with government spending. Now Democrats want to come close to doubling that spending. I don't even want to think about what inflation will look like if they succeed in their spending plans.

Thanks to Democrats' decision to utilize special Senate budget rules for their tax-and-spending spree, they have the ability today to force through this massive spending package on a totally partisan basis.

But my Republican colleagues and I will do everything we can to protect Americans from the consequences of Democrats' reckless, reckless legislation. And I hope some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—all it takes is one—will intervene before their party's taxing-and-spending spree turns an economic recovery into an economic disaster.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, let me start by commending my colleague from South Dakota, Senator THUNE, for his explanation of what is before us next after the vote that we are about to take, and that will be getting into the budget resolution leading to a rec-

onciliation package. And he is absolutely right, these taxes and this high-level spending is not something that our country can sustain, and I appreciate his outlining the very specific impacts it would have on the people we represent.

But this morning, I am also here to talk about how the Senate will do something very good today prior to getting into the budget resolution. The Senate is about to make history.

And we have heard over the years—in fact, over the decades—about the need for us to fix our infrastructure. Every President in modern times has talked about it—President Bush, President Obama, President Trump, President Biden. We have talked about it a lot here. There is a joke around town that infrastructure week has come and gone so many times that people are a little cynical when we talk about it.

Well, today is infrastructure day. We are actually going to see what we have been talking about, which is the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, saying: You know what, it is time to fix our roads and bridges. We can do so in a responsible way, not by raising taxes on the American people, but by making important investments in long-term capital assets that will last for years.

So it is an investment in fixing up our roads, our bridges, our water systems, our railroads, our ports, our electrical grids, our broadband network, and expanding that, and more.

We have had a number of procedural votes to get us to this point; and based on those procedural votes, I think it is clear that we will have the votes today, on a bipartisan basis, to do this important work. The Senate will have done its job, and we will have achieved a real lasting bipartisan victory for the people we represent.

The bill, called the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, will improve the lives of all Americans by making this long-overdue investment of \$548 billion over the next 5 years in new spending to repair, upgrade, and replace the crumbling infrastructure all of our constituents rely on every day.

That doesn't mean the money is going to be spent, by the way, over the next 5 years. It is authorized for that period, but we spend over the next 5, 10, 15, maybe 20 years on projects all over the country.

We know we need this investment. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives our American infrastructure a grade of C-minus. They also project that our economy stands to lose more than \$10 trillion in economic growth in GDP by 2039, should we fail to invest in repairs.

There is an international organization that looks at all the countries in the world, who says who has got the best infrastructure in the world and, by the way, we are number 13 or 14 on that list now. So many countries are ahead of us.

China spends about four times more than we do on infrastructure as a per-

cent of their GDP. Why? Because they know that will make their economy more efficient and they want to beat us in the economic fight that we have globally.

We want to win. That is one reason this is so important.

The American people, by the way, understand the need for this investment. In two of the more recent polls from CNBC and CBS News, 87 percent of the American people back bipartisan efforts to fix our roads, our bridges, and our water systems.

We know that this targeted, long-term investment in core infrastructure is good for the economy. Building out hard assets make us more competitive in the global economy and will create hundreds of thousands of good jobs for builders, plumbers, electrical engineers, coders, and so many other fields.

Economists, including Douglas Holtz-Eakin of the American Action Forum and Michael Strain of the conservative American Enterprise Institute, have pointed out that this type of spending on long-term spending on hard assets does not further inflation but, in fact, is counterinflationary.

To me, not only does this investment make sense, but, importantly, what we are doing here today also demonstrates to the American people that we can get our act together on a bipartisan basis and get something done. We can do big things on a bipartisan basis if we put our minds to it.

Again, after years, even decades of talking about the need to do this, we are finally getting it done.

Is it exactly the bill I would have drafted?

No. It is not exactly the bill any Senator in this Chamber would have drafted because it represents a true bipartisan effort. Each side made concessions to find that common ground.

I want to take this opportunity to briefly thank my colleagues who have gotten us to this point. We spent a lot of long nights and long days working to write this legislation, and there has been a group of members who have been particularly committed to it.

One is SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, who is on the floor right now. The work she did with President Biden early on laid the foundation for this. She is also the ranking member of the EPW Committee that produced some of the legislation that we incorporated on the surface transportation front.

But there are so many others. And I would like to start with my counterpart, the lead negotiator on the other side of the aisle, Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA of Arizona. The two of us began meeting more than 4 months ago to have discussions that would then lay the foundation for our path forward. And it was in the context of President Biden having proposed a huge package, \$2.65 trillion—so-called infrastructure package—and we believed we could pull out real infrastructure from there, take the high taxes out, and get something done for the American people. I

commend her for her leadership, for her courage, and for her ability to keep us on track during some tough times during this process.

From there, it truly became a group effort, particularly among five Republicans and five Democrats, who spent a lot of long days and nights negotiating the framework of this legislation. Some of us had worked together before at the end of the year in putting together the so-called 908 framework for the COVID-19 bill that passed late last year, that was also bipartisan.

To my friends and colleagues, Senator SUSAN COLLINS, MITT ROMNEY, LISA MURKOWSKI, BILL CASSIDY, JOE MANCHIN, JEANNE SHAHEEN, MARK WARNER, and JOHN TESTER, thank you for your efforts these past few months.

I also want to give special thanks to our colleague, KEVIN CRAMER, who joined our group late but was instrumental in finalizing this agreement.

I want to thank the White House and especially Steve Ricchetti and Brian Deese and Louisa Terrell for their support of this effort and their commitment to trying to work in a bipartisan way to get it done.

I also want to thank Senator TOM CARPER, who just joined us in the room. Along with Senator CAPITO, he was the EPW chair. He was the ranking member that laid much of the foundation for this legislation, particularly with regards to our roads and our bridges.

I want to thank my other colleagues in the so-called G-22, who helped in the 22 different working groups that were formed to help put this legislation together: RICHARD BURR, LINDSEY GRAHAM, MIKE ROUNDS, THOM TILLIS, TODD YOUNG, JERRY MORAN, CHRIS COONS, MAGGIE HASSAN, JOHN HICKENLOOPER, MARK KELLY, ANGUS KING, JACKY ROSEN—11 Democrats and 11 Republicans.

And then to my colleagues who voted with us repeatedly to advance this bill toward final passage and helped us to get to this point by giving us good input that was incorporated in the legislation—MIKE CRAPO, ROY BLUNT, CHUCK GRASSLEY, JOHN HOEVEN, JIM RISCH, DEB FISCHER, ROGER WICKER, JOHN CORNYN, DAN SULLIVAN—thank you for your input, your encouragement, and your support.

I want to give a particular thank you to my friend and colleague our Republican leader, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL. I want to thank him for his encouragement and his support throughout this process, for sticking his neck out. I know he is probably the only person who is as happy as I am in this Chamber to see us move forward with this legislation that will help us find a long-term solution to a major bridge, the Brent Spence Bridge that links our home State of Ohio and Kentucky.

I want to thank the committee staffs, who did so much to lay the groundwork for this legislation. About 73 percent of the pages in this final 2,700-page legislation are legislation

that either passed the Senate or cleared committees in the Senate in this Congress, and that is a tribute to the quiet bipartisanship that goes on at the committee level every day that allows us to get these things done with the requisite knowledge and expertise.

I also want to thank all of the non-partisan staff here in the U.S. Senate for their work as well. I know that over the past few weeks, especially, the legislative counsel has worked closely with my staff and the staffs of other offices to help formalize this proposal into final text before us today. They worked weekends. They worked late nights.

The same with the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Congressional Budget Office, they have worked around the clock to get us to this point.

And the staff here on the floor, they have been here just as early as we have and stayed just as late as any of us, in fact, later, to ensure that this could be possible. I thank them.

I also want to thank the more than 100 industry associations, unions, and trade groups that came forward to endorse this Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. That includes business groups, like the chamber of commerce, the Business Roundtable, and the National Association of Manufacturers. It also includes labor groups, like the AFL-CIO Building Trades Council, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Laborers International Union of North America.

It also includes supporters from all levels of government, including the National League of Cities; the U.S. Conference of Mayors, who endorsed it; the National Governors Association.

It includes more than 30 agricultural groups, including the American Farm Bureau.

These organizations, and so many others like them, have been critical to encouraging Members of the Senate to do the right thing.

And, finally, I want to, again, thank my staff and the staffs of all the Members who worked for months to get this bill to the finish line. We would not be here without them. There is no question about that.

On a personal staff level, I want to thank Kevin Smith, Sarah Peery, Avery Pierson, Anne Gordon, Mike Sinacore, Lydia Denis, Adeline Ewing, Connor Rabb, Connor Hinson, Kalyn Swihart, Matt Lloyd, and our entire comms team: Angie Youngen and Nate Dehmlow, Stephanie Mertz, and Chris Mitchell.

On my Homeland and Security Governmental Affairs staff, I want to thank Pam Thiessen, Amanda Neely, Sam Mulopulos, Cara Mumford, Trey Hicks, Liam McKenna, Jeff Post, and Emily Benavides.

Again, we wouldn't be standing here and about to have this vote without them working their hearts out, staying late, getting in early, and ensuring that every single part of this bill has

been looked over carefully to make sure we got it right.

Everyone involved in this effort can be proud of what this body is achieving today. The Senate is doing its job. It is doing its job by helping the American people we represent through a historic investment in our Nation's infrastructure that will serve the American people for decades to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes, followed by Senators CARPER and SCHUMER for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, well, it is great to be on the floor today. I think we have much to celebrate. We have a lot of tired people, I think, who have devoted a lot of time and energy to this effort. And so, after a long week of amendments, it is time to get this done.

Isn't it, Senator CARPER, my chairman on EPW?

We have talked all week about how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act delivers for the American people, and I am proud that the foundation of this bill—the foundations of this bill—is, as the Senator from Ohio just mentioned, based off of the two very bipartisan, unanimously bipartisan, EPW infrastructure bills that we passed in the spring.

This historic investment reflects our commitment to keeping America safe, improving our global competitiveness, and growing our economy. So I am going to go through a few of the highlights because I think they are important for the American people to know exactly what this bill does.

It provides \$303.5 billion over 5 years for Federal highway programs—a 35-percent increase from the last bill.

There is a new \$2 billion rural surface transportation grant that will dedicate resources to the Appalachian Development Highway System that runs through many of our States and other critical projects across rural America.

Combined, the overall package includes \$40 billion in dedicated resources for bridges—the single largest investment in bridge infrastructure construction of the Interstate System.

I am from a small State. I got a lot of bridges. I got a lot of bridges, and, unfortunately, a lot of them are not in the best condition. This would be a monumental improvement in what I see every day in my State.

The bill authorizes \$35 billion for water projects across the country, with a focus on upgrading aging infrastructure. This is a bill that we passed out of our EPW Committee.

It invests in innovative technologies and provides assistance to rural and low-income communities to help them keep their water safe and clean.

This package represents the largest investment in clean drinking water in

our Nation's history. That is something that I think we all can be proud of.

There is funding for broadband—essential to this 21st-century economy—education, tourism, healthcare, and all of the things we have realized that broadband brings us and how important it is for each family and each business to have it; ports, airports, locks and dams. Funding for the Corps of Engineers will improve our water resources infrastructure, facilitating the movement of goods and mitigating flood risks.

Reauthorization of the AML Program will provide billions of dollars to clean up abandoned mine sites. It is important in our State. Pennsylvania has got a lot of them too.

We are fighting against climate change, and we are cleaning up our environment.

This legislation doesn't just invest in our infrastructure, but it will allow projects to move more quickly. Far too often, infrastructure projects are delayed because of the expensive and arduous environmental review and permitting process.

An environmental impact statement under the NEPA Act for highway projects takes an average of 7 years. Think about how long that is and how much more money that costs.

The highway bill unanimously approved by our EPW Committee includes numerous project delivery provisions to provide a more efficient, predictable process.

Notably, it codifies "One Federal Decision." One Federal Decision for highway projects would establish a 2-year goal for completing environmental reviews. This isn't skirting the environmental process. This isn't running roughshod over it. This is putting a time clock on it. Let's move it.

It requires predictable schedules coordinated by Agencies and requires a single environmental document with concurrent reviews, providing accountability and transparency.

The EPW bill that we passed makes other commonsense reforms, like allowing States to be reimbursed for early utility relocation necessary for a project while the process is ongoing.

Additional provisions in the broader legislation will extend the FAST-41 permitting reforms, with which Senator PORTMAN is very, very instrumental, to help us build other types of infrastructure more efficiently.

The reforms and investments this bill makes aren't just for now but for the next generation.

We have had a very lengthy and robust debate on the Senate floor. I would like to thank Senators PORTMAN and SINEMA; Senator COLLINS, who is on the floor; Senator PORTMAN, Senator SINEMA, all of the group of 20. If I start naming them, I am going to leave somebody out. But, particularly, Senators PORTMAN and SINEMA picked up the ball where I left it. You know, I would like to think I got it to the 5-

yard line. Maybe not so quite, but I got the ball rolling, and I got it moving in the right direction, and then they did the tough sledding ahead, and I thank them for that.

I would also like to thank my counterpart, Chairman CARPER. He has been great in managing this bill on the floor but also to keep the guardrails on that we established to make sure that the group—the bipartisan group—was following along with what the committee had unanimously passed and how we felt would be the most effective way to invest in our infrastructures for the future.

I would like to thank my entire EPW Committee team, starting with my staff director, Adam, who has been with me for many, many years. What you don't know, and what I know, is that Adam was back in the back with Mary Frances, and they were the traffic cops through the whole amendment process, working with the committees, the different five committees; Republican, Democrat; leadership, leadership; all of the different individual Members.

So I am going to give Adam 1 day off, and then I think he will be right back at it. But he is really irreplaceable to our committee but also to this whole process.

And also in the Chamber with us today, Lauren Baker and Murphie Barrett have many, many hours of just incredible depth of knowledge in this area. We couldn't have done it without you.

I am going to name the rest of my staff who is not here with us: Libby Callaway, Georgianna Clemmons, who I announced has still not had her baby—I announced it last I time mentioned her; she is still waiting—Marli Collier, Travis Cone, Sarah Delavan, Will Dixon, Elizabeth Horner, Max Hyman, Tyler Jenkins, Jess Kramer, Jake Kennedy, Matt Lupes, Kayla McMurry, Taylor Meredith, Jacob Mitchell, Kelley Moore, Katherine Smith, Travis Voyles, and Andy Zock for their tireless efforts that have helped advance our committee's infrastructure legislation.

On my personal team, I would like to thank my chief of staff, Joe Brubaker and J.T. Jezierski for their leadership.

I really want to thank Senator CARPER's EPW staff, especially Mary Frances Repko, who is on the floor with the Senator today, but also Rebecca Higgins, John Kane, Greg Dotson, Laura Gilliam, Heather Dan, Mackie McIntosh, Annie D'Amato, Kenneth Martin, and Tyler Hoffman-Reardon for their dedication to this process as well.

I will say, under Mary Frances's leadership and Adam's leadership on my committee, I think they have demonstrated to many committees, and certainly to us as the chairman and ranking member, that you can have conversations, communications, and you can work things out. You can work things out if you just stick with it.

So thank you, both, very, very much.

It is time to bring this bill home and do the work that the American people expect us to do, which is to find bipartisan, consensus-driven solutions to our Nation's pressing challenges. And this is a pressing challenge.

Again, I urge a vote of yes on this historic bipartisan bill that will improve our core infrastructure.

If we pass this important legislation, I hope that the House will move swiftly—and as a former Member of the House, as we all are, the House can move swiftly when they need to—and get this bill to the President's desk quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, Senator CAPITO has been very, very gracious in her thanks and praise, and it is now her turn to be on the receiving end.

We have all heard of the Gang of 20 or the Gang of 22—the Group of 20 or 22—but before there was a gang or a group of 22, there was a gang of 1—the Senator from West Virginia, my native State.

She joined in with the President and the President's team to really get the ball rolling and sort of took the hand off from what we had done working with the administration, meeting with the administration, meeting with the President.

But with the President, after our meeting, they decided to engage. They decided to engage with the Senator.

And, eventually, to use a football analogy here, she might not have gotten the ball into the end zone, but I say to the Senator, you certainly got it into the red zone, and we are grateful for all of your work, and, really, your good humor and good treatment when things were tough.

Sitting right here on my left is Mary Frances Repko, the staff director of our EPW Committee on the Democratic side. And she is joined today, I think, on the floor by John Kane, by Mackie McIntosh, and by Tyler Hoffman. And we have Adam over here sitting next to the ranking member—Adam.

I have gone before through the names of your staff, but I will just say you all are back here, and we are grateful for the great support and work that you have done, each one of you.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank—you don't get to be floor managers without somebody in the leadership saying: Well, we would like you to be floor managers. So to Senator SCHUMER and Senator MCCONNELL, thank you for putting your confidence and trust in Senator CAPITO and me.

To the floor staff, the folks who work for the leaders, thank you very much for keeping us on the straight and level and heading in the right direction.

ROB PORTMAN is still here on the floor. I don't see KYRSTEN SINEMA. ROB is here. ROB, Senator PORTMAN, succeeds George Voinovich. He was a dear

friend as Governor. We were Governors together and Senators together. I miss George every day, but you have more than filled his shoes, my friend, and I salute you for your leadership.

KYRSTEN SINEMA is relatively new here, but she has really, really impressed a lot of people, taken the bull by the horns, never gave up, just wouldn't give up. And because of her efforts and the partnership she has with Senator PORTMAN, we are here today.

I quoted a couple of times during debate the words of Winston Churchill. Winston Churchill, when he was thrown out of office at the end of World War II, was asked as he left 10 Downing Street: Is this the end?

He replied, famously: This is not the end. This is not the beginning of the end. This is the end of the beginning. The end of the beginning. And so it is here with us today.

We are nearing the end of a debate and the final vote on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. And before we take a vote on the adoption of this measure, I just want to take a moment to reflect briefly on how this bipartisan infrastructure bill came to be.

Senator CAPITO has already referred to this, but I wanted to reinforce it. In February of this year, at my encouragement, President Biden invited Senator CAPITO, Senator CARDIN, Senator INHOFE, and me—all senior members of the Environment and Public Works Committee—to the White House to discuss the need to make bold investment in our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. He asked us, the Environment and Public Works Committee, to lead the effort to address that need; to get to work in our committee by crafting and reporting to the full Senate, to this body, surface transportation legislation—roads, highways, bridges—as well as drinking water and water sanitation infrastructure, climate change legislation by springtime. That was the request.

In the weeks that followed, working together with all 22 members—20 members, rather, of the Environment and Public Works Committee, that is exactly what we did—10 Democrats, 10 Republicans working together. In May, we reported out of our committee a 5-year transportation bill with a unanimous bipartisan vote of 20 to 0.

By more than a third, we increased investments in our roads, our highways, and our bridges, with a historic climate title to help address the most serious challenge facing our planet, and that is the threat of global warming.

That Transportation bill is at the core of the legislation we consider today, along with the drinking water and wastewater infrastructure legislation that was also reported unanimously out of the Committee on Environment and Public Works earlier this year and passed by the full Senate right here, earlier this year, by an 89-to-2 vote.

That bill targets the most impoverished communities across America to help them meet their drinking and wastewater treatment needs.

I am proud—we are proud—of the work that our committee has done, made possible by the partnership that we enjoy. I think of the work that we did—I think of it as laying the foundation. Clean drinking water, wastewater sanitation, roads, highways, bridges, climate really are the foundation on which this package was built.

And we tried to provide an example to the rest of the Senate and the other committees of jurisdiction, and I like to think that maybe we did that.

Leadership is all about leading, and the President sought and encouraged us to try to lead earlier this year, and I think we have met that request and then some. I want to thank him. He didn't give up either. And he has been negotiating with Senator CAPITO and negotiating with the team, the gang of 22. He never gave up. A lot of people said this was a fool's errand. He never gave up. I am proud of him and the leadership that he has provided.

The bill that is before this body today builds on the strong bipartisan work of our committee, Environment and Public Works, as well as the good work done by our colleagues on other committees—the Commerce Committee and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee among them. My appreciation to all who worked so tirelessly on this Herculean undertaking.

Now, let me be clear. This legislation isn't perfect. It has been said before. You will hear that again. I have never written a bill that was perfect, and this certainly, even though we had a fair hand in writing a lot of it, is not perfect. In spite of making real progress, it doesn't go as far as we would like to go in advancing equity, the way we treat other people—the Golden Rule, treating other people the way we want to be treated—in tackling the existential crisis of our time, and that is climate change.

There is much more work to do on these issues—issues that, in my mind, we have a moral obligation to address. So rest assured I will be joining my colleagues in fighting for progress on these fronts in the days and weeks ahead.

But let's not make the perfect the enemy of the good. And make no mistake, the bill before us does a whole lot of good. It is the largest long-term investment in our Nation's infrastructure in almost a century—almost a century—and the largest Federal investment in history when it comes to public transit, clean energy transmission, climate resiliency, clean drinking water, and wastewater infrastructure.

Now, on this day, the American people are looking for us to strengthen our economy and support our communities and build for our future. On this day, we have a President dedicated to moving past partisan divides and meeting

the moment for our Nation. And on this day, leaders in this body from across the political spectrum have come together in shared purpose, in common cause, and commitment to find a way forward.

I want to close with the thought that there is a lot of bridge money in here, a lot of money to fix bridges all over: West Virginia, Delaware, Ohio, Maine. You name it. There is a lot of troubled water in our country, troubled water. And I would like to think, with this legislation, crafted together across the aisle, bipartisan, with the administration, we have created a bridge over troubled waters. Think about that: a bridge over troubled waters—and right at a time when we really needed one. And we could use a few more as we go along.

Sometimes when I travel people ask me—they say: What do you do? What do you do anyway?

They don't know what I do, on the airplane or whatever. I say: I help people.

They say: How do you help them?

I think the best way we can help people is help them find a job, have a job where they can support themselves and their families. We can help make sure that they have clean water to drink. We can help make sure they have clean air to breathe.

Those are ways that we are helping people with this legislation—big time, big time—and we will be doing it for a long time.

Colleagues, on this day, we can vote to make a downpayment on a brighter future for our country. I want to ask you to join me in seizing the day in voting to advance this legislation together. On this day, let us seize the day. Carpe diem. Carpe diem.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first let me, before I begin, thank Senators CARPER and CAPITO for managing this bill and doing it in such a fine way—and their staffs as well.

Now, Mr. President, it has been a long and winding road, but we have persisted, and now we have arrived. There were many logs in our path, detours along the way, but the American people will now see the most robust injection of funds into infrastructure in decades.

In a few moments, the Senate will pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill, dedicating over a trillion dollars to strengthen every major category of our country's physical infrastructure. It has been a long time in coming. Our economy is No. 1 in the world, but infrastructure ranks No. 13. You will find better roads, bridges, airports, and broadband in the United Arab Emirates than in the United States of America.

Today, the Senate takes a decades-overdue step to revitalize America's infrastructure and give our workers, our businesses, and our economy the tools

to succeed in the 21st century. The bill will make large and significant differences in both productivity and job creation in America for decades to come.

To my colleagues, particularly the group of 10, then 11, then 22 who worked so hard in a bipartisan way, congratulations. Congratulations on a job well done. Thank you to our committee chairs and ranking members whose expertise was required at several stages. And to the staff who sacrificed weekends, family gatherings, and most often sleep in order to finish this bill, thank you.

Thank you to President Biden and his team at the White House. President Biden has been in office for only 7 months, and already the Senate is about to pass the first major infrastructure package in over a decade, on a bipartisan basis, with his complete and total involvement.

Throughout the process, I have tried to prod the negotiators along when they have needed it and given them space when they have asked for it. At times, it took a deadline to kick negotiations into high gear; other times it required a few extra days to allow compromise to gel. But when the Senate is run with an open hand rather than a closed fist, Senators can accomplish big things.

So despite this long road we have taken, we have finally, finally reached the finish line.

Of course, we Democrats believe we need to do much more. The bipartisan infrastructure bill is a very significant bill, but our country has other very significant, very important challenges. Working families need help. Small businesses need a leg up. Climate change threatens the future of our planet. Our Tax Code needs to be straightened out. Other parts of our infrastructure not addressed in this bipartisan bill still need focus, attention, and help.

So to my colleagues who are concerned that this does not do enough on climate, for families, and making corporations and the rich pay their fair share, we are moving on to a second track, which will make generational transformation in these areas.

Once this bill is complete, the Senate will immediately turn to the second track in our two-track strategy, passing a budget resolution that will unlock historic investments in American jobs, American families, and the fight against climate change. The two-track strategy is proceeding full steam ahead.

At its core, the Democratic budget—both parts—is about restoring the middle class in the 21st century and giving more Americans the opportunity to get there. Too many in the middle class are worried about their future. The sunny American optimism has turned into a sourness, an anger, a divisiveness in the land.

Bold, transformative action on both traditional infrastructure and on help-

ing families—middle-class families—cope and on climate will restore that bright, sunny optimism that has been part of this American psyche for centuries.

At its core, what we want to do is this: We want to cut taxes for families.

We want to create millions of jobs while tackling the climate crisis, and we want to pay for it by making corporations and the wealthy finally pay their fair share.

After we pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill this morning, Senators should expect to vote to proceed to the budget resolution, and we will begin the process for debating amendments shortly thereafter.

Democrats are prepared to move quickly and decisively through the amendment process so we can finish what we set out to do before the end of the work period. The longer it takes to finish, the longer the Senate will be in session.

At the start of July, I set two ambitious goals for this Chamber before our August recess. One was to pass a bipartisan infrastructure bill to boost our economy, something the Senate has not achieved in many years, and this is a strong and bold accomplishment. The second was to pass a budget resolution with the kinds of transformative changes I have mentioned. Pundits called it wishful thinking in a Chamber known for unhurried deliberation.

Well, we are moments away from achieving the first goal, and I am confident that very soon the Senate will take the first major step toward achieving our second goal. The Senate is on track to finish both tracks and deliver an outstanding result for the American people.

VOTE ON H.R. 3684

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 314 Leg.]

YEAS—69

Baldwin	Booker	Capito
Bennet	Brown	Cardin
Blumenthal	Burr	Carper
Blunt	Cantwell	Casey

Cassidy	Kelly	Romney
Collins	King	Rosen
Coons	Klobuchar	Sanders
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Schatz
Cramer	Lujan	Schumer
Crapo	Manchin	Shaheen
Duckworth	Markey	Sinema
Durbin	McConnell	Smith
Feinstein	Menendez	Stabenow
Fischer	Merkley	Sullivan
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Tester
Graham	Murphy	Tillis
Grassley	Murray	Van Hollen
Hassan	Ossoff	Warner
Heinrich	Padilla	Warnock
Hickenlooper	Peters	Warren
Hirono	Portman	Whitehouse
Hoeven	Reed	Wicker
Kaine	Risch	Wyden

NAYS—30

Barrasso	Hawley	Paul
Blackburn	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Boozman	Inhofe	Sasse
Braun	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Lummis	Toomey
Ernst	Marshall	Tuberville
Hagerty	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Rounds

The bill (H.R. 3684), as amended, was passed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, once again, congratulations to all of those who worked so hard on this very significant and very important bill, and now we proceed to the second track.

SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2023 THROUGH 2031—Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 122, S. Con. Res. 14, the concurrent resolution on the budget.

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 122, S. Con. Res. 14, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2022 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2023 through 2031.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

(Mr. PADILLA assumed the Chair.)

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 315 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Booker	Cardin
Bennet	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Casey